

REMARKS

Claims 6-8, 9-11, 13, 19 and 21-24 were previously pending in the present application. All of these claims recited what the Office previously considered to be allowable subject matter. However, further rejections were made in the above-referenced Office action.

Specifically, claims 8, 11, 13, 19 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Jeske et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,684,439) (referred to as "Jenske" in the Office action) and Gomas (U.S. Pat. No. 6,134,994). Claims 6, 7, 10 and 22-24 were rejected as obvious over the combination of Gomas and the newly cited Haxton reference (U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,952) when viewed in light of Jeske et al. and the Jackson reference (U.S. Pat. No. 4,279,076).

By the amendment to claim 11 above, all of the claims now recite a biasing member acting on the handles that biases open the working edges of the wire stripper. Furthermore, the forward grips are now recited as being disposed between the hinge point and the biasing member.

None of the noted references discloses or suggests such a construction. As an initial matter, none of the cited references teaches forward grips, as defined in the claims. Jeske et al, Haxton and Jackson fail to teach any forward concave areas suitable for a thumb and finger, and there is no associated outward extensions.

At page 2 of the action, the Office states that the areas between 8A and 7A in Fig. 1 of Gomas constitute forward grips in the same manner as claimed. However, while these areas are adjacent to outward extensions, these areas are not gripping areas. In fact, it is expressly taught that the outward extensions 8A and 8B are "guards." It should be clearly understood that these guards keep fingers and other parts of the user's hand from sliding up the handle and getting caught, pinched or cut at the hinge and/or the cutting head of the device. As such, Gomas not only does not teach grips forward of the guards, but that such forward parts of the device are not to be touched, and thus are not grips. Although not mentioned in the Office action, Gomas teaches an alternate embodiment shown in Figs. 10-12 having

guards 38A and 38B and a small raised bead 57 on the lower handle. The space between the bead and the guard 38B can accommodate a finger and would thus constitute a grip since it is at the gripable portion of the handle, that is, not between the guard and the hinge 32. However, even this prior art construction falls short of the claimed construction. There is only one such grip, and even applying it to the other handle so that were two such grips would not necessarily be suitable to accommodate a thumb. Moreover, Gomas, either alone or in combination with the other references, does not teach having a pair of grips forward of a biasing member, such positioning providing more accurate control of the wire stripper.

For at least the above reasons, all of the currently pending claims 6-8, 9-11, 13, 19 and 21-24 are believed to now be allowable. Allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

No fees are believed necessary for consideration of this response, however, any fees deemed necessary should be charged to Deposit Account 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,

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